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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Edward T. Lebreton et al. :
Application No. 10/074,449 : DECISION ON PETITION
Filed: February 13, 2002 : UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6)
Attorney Docket No. 32285 :
:

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR § 1.78(a)(6), filed July 20, 2004, to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) for the benefit of the prior-filed provisional application set forth in the concurrently filed amendment.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(ii) and must be filed during the pendency of the nonprovisional application. In addition, the petition must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(i) to the prior-filed application, unless previously submitted;
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

The instant pending nonprovisional application was filed on February 13, 2002, within twelve months of the filing date of the prior-filed provisional application, Application No. 60/271,289, which was filed on February 23, 2001, for which priority is claimed. A reference to the prior-filed provisional application has been included in an amendment to the first sentence of the specification following the title.

However, the amendment is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed application. Petitioner's attention is directed to Dart Industries v. Banner, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980), where the court drew a distinction between a permissible 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement and the impermissible introduction of new matter by way of incorporation by reference in a 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement. The court specifically stated:

Section 120 merely provides a mechanism whereby an application becomes entitled to benefit of the filing date of an earlier application disclosing the same subject matter. Common subject matter must be disclosed, in both applications, either specifically or by an express incorporation-by-reference of prior disclosed subject matter. Nothing in section 120 itself operates to carry forward any disclosure from an earlier application. In re deSeversky, supra at 674, 177 USPQ at 146-147. Section 120 contains no magical disclosure-augmenting powers able to pierce new matter barriers. It cannot, therefore, "limit" the absolute and express prohibition against new matter contained in section 251.

In order for the incorporation by reference statement to be effective as a proper safeguard against the omission of a portion of a prior application, the incorporation by reference statement must be included in the specification-as-filed, or in an amendment specifically referred to in an oath or declaration executing the application. See In re deSeversky, *supra*. Note also MPEP 201.06(c).

Accordingly, before the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6) can be granted, a substitute amendment¹ deleting the incorporation by reference statement, along with a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6), is required.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop PETITIONS
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¹ Note 37 CFR 1.121

By hand: Customer Window located at:

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Any questions concerning this matter may be directed to Irvin Dingle at (703) 306-5684.³


Frances Hicks

Lead Petitions Examiner
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Office of the Deputy Commissioner
for Patent Examination Policy

² Effective approximately September 27, 2004, the facsimile number will be 571-273-0025, which is when the Office of Petitions expects to move to the new quarters in Alexandria, Virginia. However, this number is not to be used for submitting formal papers, but merely is to be used for receiving courtesy and informal papers and petitions to withdraw from issue only. Courtesy and informal papers will not be made a part of the file record.

³ Effective September 27, 2004, the phone number will be 571-272-3210.